

A
LETTER

TO

Dr. FOWLER,

Vicar of St. GILES CRIPPLEGATE.

IN

A N S W E R

TO HIS

Late Vindicatory Preface.

By { WILLIAM NEWBERRY,
&
{ WILLIAM EDMUNDS.

Yspys y dengys y dyn,
O ba radd y bo ei wreiddyn.

L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year, 1685.

ER

TO
D. TOWLER.

ER

ER

A
L E T T E R
T O
Dr. Fowler, &c.

Reverend Pastor,

UPON Perusal of a Preface to a Sermon upon *Slander*, under your Name, We the Subscribers of this Paper found you as hard upon us in the *Press*, as you use to be in the *Pulpit*. And therefore for the Satisfaction of the World, and the Discharge of our Selves, we have resolv'd upon the Publishing of this Address.

You are pleas'd to mention a Certificate given us, and your Repentance for it. Let it not trouble you, Sir, for the Certificate has done you no harm, and us no good: For a Great Man told us, *That it would shake the Credit of our Loyalty*; and so we laid it aside, as a *Thing we were not Proud of*. The Words were, *That we were Peaceable, and Christian like temper'd Men*. And truly, when your Hand was in upon Certifying, we had a mind to Try, If you would do it for Loyal Men, as well as for Others.

Your Opinion of us, we perceive, is much alter'd since you gave us that Character; though the World will witness the Justice we have to the Title of it, and stand in Admiration at us, for Bearing from your Self, and your Assistant, all the *Satyr*s, *Invectives*, and *Comminations* against us, that have been vented in the Pulpit, without praying the Justice of the Law to hold your Hand.

Besides this, It hath been your Practice to Discourse of us both, with Great and Small, as *Monsters of Spight and Malice*; which is a Charge, that we shall in Charity divide betwixt your Self and your Assistant.

And for our own Vindication, We do Appeal to All that know us, and our Consciences do bear us Witness, that we never oppos'd you out of any Ill-Will to your Person; but only to put a stop to some of your *Latitudinarian* Designs and Practices, by a Due Course of Law.

And since we are forc'd upon this Way of Clearing our Selves, we must Impute the Cause now Depending, to your own Irregular and Unwarrantable Proceedings in your Office, which have Engaged us to Appear, as we do, for the Honour and Defence of our *Mother Church*.

And

And if this be an Act of *Spight and Malice*, then we are Guilty; and our Crime is, the Service of the Established Church.

Your *Preface* goes on in the Praise of Mr. R.W. and Mr. S. The former of these you Represent for a *Truly Loyal Conforming Man*, and our Proceedings against him to be *Spightful and Malicious*.

We shall not Reflect upon his being a Souldier under Colonel *Hacker*, and so continuing till near the Kings Restauration; A noted *Conventicler*, and one of *Doelittles Congregation*, till he came to be Churchwarden of *Cripplegate*.

We shall not Reflect upon his Rude, Trifling, Antick Gesture, at the Church, in the time of Divine Service, which appeared no other to the Congregation, than a Ridiculing of the very Office, as well as the Performance of that Holy Duty.

We could tell you, Sir, That since his *Certified Conformity*, which we account upon, as the Date of his Conversion, we never heard, that he ever gave the Church Service one good word, or ever Attended to it with that Reverence as he ought to do.

We presume you are no Stranger, Sir, to a Passage of His at a *Ward-Moot Inquest*. Where a Motion was made to begin the Work, with Reading the Morning Prayers. Your truly *Loyal and Conforming Mr. W.* opposed it, *Calling it an Innovation. I hope, Mr. W. (say's one) you will not call the Prayers an Innovation, I mean, says Mr. W. the bringing of them into the Quest is an Innovation.* To which one Replied: *That it was generally used in all the Quests in London, and had been used in Cripplegate too before Mr. W. was born.* Whereupon Mr. W. flew from the Table, crying, *They that will have a May-pole, shall have a May-pole.* And as the rest were Rising to go to Church to Prayers, Mr. W. got him to the Fire in the Chamber, saying; *You that are so hot in Zeal, that can be warmed by Prayers, may go into the Church; As for my part, they never warmed me in all my Life; I'll stay and warm my self by the Fire. And if I had thought this, that you would have had Prayers, I would have bespoke some Fiddlers this Morning, that I saw at Tom Charnley's, (an Ale-house-Keeper); For Prayers without Musick do's not do well.* And during the whole Session, he never went with the Quest to Prayers, though he was a Member of it.

The Report of this Scandalous Rudeness being told in the hearing of Mr. Recorder, he was pleased to examine the Matter, and to appoint the Reporters of it to come to the Sessions at *Guild-Hall*, and there to Deliver their Information upon Oath; which accordingly they did. And the Recorder Ordered an Information to be Exhibited against Mr. W. for Depraving and Ridiculing the *Church Service*. But by great and powerful Solicitation on his behalf, there was a *Noli Prosequi* granted, before the next Term; not for the Baseness of the Cause, as you would have People believe, but for other Reasons, not so proper for this Occasion.

Another Instance of Mr. W's Affection to the Church may be this. The Alderman of the Ward Ordered the Presenting of all *Conventicle Houses*. In pursuance whereof a Motion was made in the very same *Quest*. Upon this up starts Mr. W. and called it, *A Spiteful and Malicious Motion; For who could prove the Proprietors of Conventicle Houses.* To which it was replied, *That they would be easily found out.* Why then, faith

with Mr. W. make what Presentments you will, For my part I will never set my Hand to them.

A Word more now, with your Favour, to his Loyalty, He was as *Active a Stirrer* in the Tumultuous Elections, at *Guild-Hall* as any Man; and Polled always on the Factious side. He was All in All with his Friend *Bateman* (at present Prisoner for the Conspiracy) to get Hands to a Seditious Petition. And whoever refused it, he Branded him for a Papist; Particularly Mr. *Newbery*, now Deputy of the Ward. And this must be no part of the Quarrel you are pleased to Mention.

The Steeple was so Crazy it seems, that on the 29th of May, Mr. W. would not let the Bells be Rung, for fear it should fall. And yet upon *Shaftsburie's Ignoramus Jury*, the Steeple was strong enough to bear it. He himself, as Churchwarden, ordered the Bells to be Rung, and made a Bonfire at his Own Door, for Joy, at the Deliverance. Its very true, Sir, that he was *Tallow-Chandler* also to your Good Lord and Master, and that we hope was the Ground of your Certifying Mr. W. to be a truly Loyal Conforming Man.

As for Mr. S. Your Commendations are well bestowed on him; For he is your Grand Informer, a Talebearer betwixt you and your Parishioners, a very Busy-Body in other Mens Offices and Affairs. And for his Reputation, There is not a Curate in *England*, that either Studies less, or Usurps more upon his Neighbours.

We do not dislike him indeed, Sir, for his Sermons upon *Restitution*, as you would be thought to Imagine; For they were Preacht before we ever bore Office in the Parish. And so we could not be Instruments of Wasting the *Poors Stock*, which most Untruly, as well as Invidiously, you intimate in your Preface. But if you will allow a Fallhood to bring Truth to light, we shall now tell you the Story of those Sermons.

It was Mr. S's Hap one Day to be chopping of Logick with a *Pawn Broker* in the Parish, who Reproving Mr. S. for some Ill thing he had done, Mr. S. was much Offended at him, inso much that he fell upon the Mans Calling the next Sunday in the Pulpit, with the Doctrine of *Restitution*; where he Denounc'd *Damnation*, against Usury, Extortion, and Oppression.

But this Treatment is no News from Mr. S. to our Parish and Officers, and our Great Slander and Damage. For by these Calumnies, He has diverted the Charity of divers of our Good Benefactors, and gotten the Mony into his own Hand, whereof he gives no Account.

He makes a great Noise indeed, how much the Poor are obliged to him, and yet by your Favour and His, the Number is much encreased, and the Taxes considerably raised, since he came amongst us.

He had once a Project of setting up a *Nursery* in the Parish to lessen the Charge, and bring poor Children up to Learning. To this end he got the Benevolence of several Good People, and Eighteen pence a Week of the Parish for every Child he took, being the very Price they were kept at before. He stockt his *Nursery* with about twenty of these Children, who as they went every Sunday Morning to *Cornhill Lecture*, gave the Spectators to understand, that they were Mr. S's Charity-Children. But instead of being Taught, these Poor Children were let out to *Cooks Shops*, *Spinning-Wheels*, or the like, at Twelve pence or Eighteen pence a Week, and were so scantily fed, and nastily kept, that the Churchwardens or Overseers, took them away to their old Maintenance, and some of them dying, it was not thought convenient to give the Searchers the View of their Bodies.

This shall be made good (whenever Mr. S. pleases) to any Court of Justice, without any need of his Prophaning the Pulpit with *Ribaldry*, and Scandal against his Neighbours.

And therefore, Sir, as you value your own Credit and Ours, be no longer led by Mr. S. into these uncharitable Mistakes; Curates do not behave them-

selves thus in other Parishes. And its hard for *Cripplegate*, to be the only Curate-Ridden Parish in *London*.

Many of his Sermons are not only Personal Invectives, but some of them so Broad and Course: That the Men he Intends, are Pointed at by the Congregation: But its well, if he does not play the *Muggleton*, and pronounce them Damn'd!

We have born these Indignities thus long, more out of Respect to the Holy Function, than to the Curate; and we do joyntly desire you would keep him to his *Text*, and advise him to Preach *Jesus Christ* as becomes a Minister of the Gospel. But the main Business is yet to come. The Cause depending in *Doctors Commons*, betwixt your self and One of us.

The Sum of your *Preface* on that Matter, is partly Accusation, partly Excuse. And the Printing of it might have bin spar'd, after so many Private Discourses and Publick Preachments upon that Subject, wherein you have made us, and some others of our Neighbours, a Parcel of Lewd, Vicious, Prophane, Scandalous, Debauch't Fellows: Wherem the whole Parish, and all that know us, and will speak Truth, will appear to our Vindication. Sir, you should do well, to lay your *Certificate* and your *Sermons* together, and Reconcile this Character to the other. In the mean while deal with us as a Gentleman, a Christian and a Minister. You are pleas'd to Intimate, That we are Netled at your Preaching Impartially against certain Vices, which make Loyal Conformists a Disgrace to the King and the Church. Now the Truth is, Those Vices are rather chargeable upon your sort of Loyal Conformists, than upon any of the King's and Churches, that we know of. And the scope of your Present Design is this, There is a Heavy Charge sworn against you at *Doctors Commons*; And one of us is the Fair and Open Prosecutor of it. So that if you can either Blast us in our Credit, or disable us in our Fortunes, from going thorough with it, you do a great part of your Work. And upon this Consideration, you have not left a Stone turned to Defame us with Persons of Honour, and to Disparage us in our Dealings with our Customers and Tradesmen, to say nothing of your Reflection upon the Alderman of the Ward for chusing so Vile, Scandalous, and Debauch't a Creature, as you have Represented his Deputy to be. Who is so sensible of these Indignities, that he is resolv'd in the first place to acquit himself, and afterwards to Resign on St. Thoma's Day next Ensuing.

For the best Words you can bestow on him and others are these; *Enemies, Malicious Enemies, Implacable Spirited Men, Wretched Lyars, Vile-Slanderers, Vicious Debauch't Men, not known whether Papists, Contrivers of Mischief, Deprav'd, Forsaken of Divine Grace, &c.* And whoever compares the Doctrine of your *Sermon*, with the Practice of the *Preface* and *Conclusion*, will hardly believe one and the same Wise Man to have bin the Author of them. Or that the Design of Christianity and of your *Preface*, had one and the same Father.

The first Visible Change of your Countenance and Carriage towards us was (as we have Good Cause to Remember) just upon our Suppressing six or seven *Conventicles* in the Freedom Part of the Parish; And after that, upon our Endeavours to Purge the *Vestry* of some very Ill Men, (which by your and Mr. S's Artifice had bin lately Introduc'd) your Countenance seem'd to be further altered towards us. The one of these was an *Anabaptist*; Another, an *Anabaptist Preacher*; the Third an *Elder of Griffith's Congregation*, and a *Conspirator*; and the Rest of the same Leaven, and who could never be Admitted by your Predecessor the Bishop of Gloucester.

It's, Sir, you know, a Populous Parish, and we thought it our Duty to the Government to do what we did. We Petitioned His Majesty in this Affair, and obtain'd a Gracious Reference to Mr. Attorney General and Mr. Recorder: And you your self were present, with a great many more of the Parish, at a full Hearing before Mr. Recorder and the Alderman of the Ward; where you were urged again to clear the *Vestry* of those Men. Your Reply was, That they were New Converts, or upon Coming over, and sober Men; and that you thought in time they

they might prove useful Persons to the Government. To which the Alderman made Answer, Truly Doctor, if they are such, you should have made six or seven years Tryal of them before you brought them into the Kestry. But at length, after much struggling, you desir'd them to withdraw themselves from the Kestry in such a manner, that every Body saw your Heart went along with them, even when you parted with them.

You speak of Articles Exhibited against you, and you say, That, the First (for Obstructions Presentments) had nothing like a Proof of it Produc'd in Court; but in this we Remit our selves to the Law.

You cannot but remember, Sir, how Fierce you were upon the Deputy in Doctors Commons, Exclaiming, What had a Deputy of a Ward to do to meddle with Presentments: and Threatning him, That if the Churchwardens Presented those whose Names he had given, you would Present the Churchwardens for Perjury, and Him for not coming to Church on Holy-days.

We must mind you likewise, Sir, of your Suppressing the Order appointed to be Publish'd for the Presenting of all People that did not come to the Sacrament; and of your calling it, A Device to make the Clergy Odious.

You told the Churchwardens (you say) That they should Present Impartially, and not gratifie any Mans particular Pique or Disgust. If your meaning was, They must Present All, or None, there must then be no Presentments at all: For how should they take Cognizance of at least Thirty thousand Souls in that Parish? So that since All could not be taken notice of, why might not the same Prudent Course serve in Gripplegate, as well as in all other Parishes; that is, to Single out the Heads and Ring-Leaders of the Faction, which would probably bring the Inferior Sort of Dissenters into better Order? This Course was commended by Dr. P. in Eighty two and Eighty three, and in several places had good Success.

We need say no more to Prove the Good-will you had to the Obstructing of Presentments: So that now we shall briefly set before you the Inconveniences that followed upon your Backwardness to Present.

The Warmth which you were pleas'd to express toward the Covering and Protecting of Phanatics, presently made Gripplegate a Sanctuary for the Dissenters, and brought them out of other Parishes into Ours, as if they had Fled from Persecution into a City of Refuge. They themselves owning and declaring, That they should not be Molested with us, for any Church Matters or Sacraments.

As for the Second Article, concerning your Administring the Sacrament to Excommunicated Persons, there needs no farther Proof, than your own Answer to the Libel in Court, and your own Confession and Declaration in your Preface.

It's something however, that the Excommunicates were Notorious Dissenters, and chosen (by your Interest and Influence) Churchwardens in the Lordship part of the Parish, contrary to the Liking of the Loyal Men in that Vestry. Nay, there are some that say, You were resolv'd they should be Churchwardens, for this very Reason, That they would make no Presentments.

After this they were Cited to take the Churchwardens Oath, which they peremptorily refused to do; and thereupon a Sentence of Excommunication was Pronounc'd against them in the Court, in Form: And an Instrument for Publishing the same in the Church was sent to you, which for some time you laid by, according to Good Advice, (as you say) and afterwards Admitted these Persons to the Sacrament, being Actually Excommunicated and before they were Absolv'd; though after they had Receiv'd, you did your Best to have them Absolved. Let any Man make an Excuse for this Usurpation, if he can. No, say you, there is no need of it; for I have made a sufficient Apology for it my self in these Words of my Preface.

I had leave to defer the Publishing of that Excommunication; and the Sacrament was given them before it was Publish'd: And I had then great Assurance, that Excommunications can take no Effect till they are Publish'd: And what I did, was done upon the Best Advice I was capable of Having; and I rely'd upon the AUTHORITY OF MORE THAN ONE ECCLESIASTICAL JUDGE. And the

the same Article had been Exhibited against many other Divines besides my Self, had they been so unhappy, as to have had in those Parishes any People of such Venomous Spirits as I am Infested with: So that, if this were a Fault, it was a Fault of most Excusable (if I may not say) Invincible Ignorance.

You must now give us leave, Sir, to make some Remarks upon your Apology.

First, We find that *Doctors Commons* and Dr. Fowler are divided upon the Question: They are positive that it's a Fault, and the Doctor is doubtful; for you say, *If it be a Fault.*

Secondly, It seems not to stand with the Honour of your Dignity in the Church, to pretend *Ignorance* in a Point of the highest Nature in our Church Discipline.

Thirdly, Your Defence is only *Crimination*, and you should not have brought your *Advisers* upon the Stage; but rather have kept that Secret behind the Curtain.

Fourthly, You should have spar'd them for the sake of the *Ten Pounds* Cost you boast of, and some other Reasons: For it's a New thing, for a *Criminal*, who Confesses the Fact, to be Clear'd; and the *Accuser*, or *Prosecutor*, that makes Good his Charge, to be Punish'd.

Fifthly, The Many *Divines* you speak of are Men that we never yet heard of.

Sixthly, We will leave the World to Judge, whether the Fault lyes in the *Venemous Parishioners*, or in the *Peevish Minister*.

Seventhly, We take your *Slanders* the less ill, because you make no Bolder with us, than with Our Ecclesiastical Judges, and many of our Divines, nay, with our Mother Church it self, in giving the Church of *Rome* the Advantage of Throwing a Reproach upon us, which we believe She never had before, since the *Blessed Reformation*.

For what will they say, to see such a Doctrine so Authorized, and a Parochial Minister in the Church of *England* take more upon him than the Pope of *Rome*; that is to say, in Admitting of Excommunicated Persons to the *Communion* before they are Absolv'd?

Sir, As we have done you no Wrong all this while, so we will now do you this Right in the Story about the Election of *Common Council* Men, to Declare, That we believe you were no ways concerned in it; but that the Greater part of it belongs properly to Mr. S.

And now to Conclude, We cannot but Observe what an unlucky Hand you have had at Vindications: You wrote one against *Bunnion* the Tinker; Another for Breaking the Church-Windows at *Gloucester*, and making use of the *Trinity* in the Seal, that was Idolatry in the Glafs. This *Preface* of yours is the Third; and we do not know, but that this *Letter* of Ours may Produce a Fourth.

If all this be for your Health, and by way of Prescription, as (a Wag said) now and then to take a lusty Dose of Vindication Pills to Purge Choler, we wish you good speed. We would do this in better Terms, but *Letters* and *Vindications* are none of our Talent.

You were pleas'd to bestow a Couple of *Latin Verses* upon us at the end of your *Preface*; it's possible they may be something against our Church, but we understand them not.

We presume however, that they will do as well at the End of a *Letter*, as at the End of a *Preface*; And therefore we shall conclude with them, Desiring, that if your Book comes to a Second Edition you would bless the World with your Crippling Verses in *English*.

*Hoc mihi pro certo quod si cum Stercore certo,
Vincor, seu Vincor, certe Ego Maculor.*

Sir, We ask your Pardon for the Freedom we have taken to Vindicate (according to your Certificate,) Sir,

Your Peaceable and Christian-like Temper'd Parishioners and Servants,

WILLIAM NEWBERY, Deputy.
WILLIAM EDMUNDS.

Small handwritten mark or signature in the upper left corner.